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REMARKS
ON THE RECENT TRAVELS OF DR. BARTH
IN
CENTRAL AFRICA,
OR
SOUDAN.

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE ETHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY
OF NEW YORK, NOVEMBER, 1858.

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CENTRAL AFRICA.

THE successful exploration of Central Africa, by Dr. Henry Barth, during an uninterrupted period of five years, is the great achievement of this age of commercial and scientific enterprise. The results of this exploration have just been presented to the world in five ample volumes, full of the deepest interest to the lover of science, and to the aspirations of improved humanity.

Until the first expedition of Denham and Clapperton to Bornou, Central Africa, or Soudan,—the land of the blacks,—was a terra incognita, with the exception of the imperfect lights thrown upon it by the meagre narratives of Arabian travellers. The second expedition

of Captain Clapperton, from the Bight of Benin, to Sakatou, where he died, resulted in the navigation of the mysterious Niger, to its mouth by Lander, the servant of Captain Clapperton; thus, for the first time, was solved that geographic problem, which had defied all speculation.

To extend our knowledge of Central Africa; to open its obscure regions to commerce; to obtain more accurate notions of its geography, nations and tribes of people, has been the constant purpose of the British Government. In 1849, Lord Palmerston determined to send a mixed scientific and commercial expedition to Soudan, and Dr. Richardson was placed at its head. With great liberality, he accepted the offer of three Germans, devoted to science, who proposed to accompany the expedition. These were Dr. Henry Barth, Vogel and Overweg. Of the chief of the expedition, Dr. Richardson, and of MM. Vogel and Overweg, the world has had to deplore the untimely decease. They fell victims to the climate of Soudan, which must, generally, be the grave of adventurous Europeans. The safe return of Dr.

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Barth to Europe, from his tour of five years, in that pestiferous region, as the sole survivor of this expedition, is a subject of universal congratulation, and of deep gratitude to protecting Providence.

It is the great merit of Dr. Barth, to have traced out, with great approximation to truth, the whole configuration of Central Africa, and through the artistic skill of Dr. Peterman, to have prepared correct maps of that region, which heretofore cannot be said to have belonged to scientific geography. Beyond his own instrumental observations, he has collected an amount of *itineraries*, through every portion of Soudan, which must excite astonishment and admiration. They were made under great privations, and often under the pressure of disease.

His narrative of journeys, covers the vast area lying between Tripoli and the Pagan Kingdom of Baghirmi, 1,500 miles in length, and 800 in breadth, from the eastern shores of Lake Tchad, to the mysterious city of Timbuktu. Having determined the longitude of Kukawa, the capital of Bornou, to be one degree west of its supposed position, an impor-

tant starting-point has been acquired and established, for geographic relations and dependencies. The water or river system of Soudan, which has Lake Tchad for its reservoir, and centre of concentration for the rivers Shari from the south, and other streams from the east and west, has been defined. The great eastern branch of the Niger, called the Benuwe, has been traced, and its volume and direction mapped. To this important artery of Soudan, commerce and civilization look with hopeful expectations. The Benuwe has already been navigated, in its western portion, by the British government steamer "Pleiad," and now at this moment, another steamer lies dismantled in the Niger, having failed in a similar beneficent enterprise. The mighty agencies of science, Christian benevolence, and commerce, are thus being concentrated upon the moral elevation and evangelization of Africa. The most effective achievement in this lofty purpose, would be the suppression of the internal wars for the enslaving of captive pagans. A powerful central government, such as that of the Foolahs at Sakatou, or Hamdullahi on the upper waters

of the Niger, would be the most potent agency for this purpose. Strong central government is a necessary condition, to elevate the moral and social condition of a people. Their existence in fragmentary independent tribes, is opposed to all individual or national progress.

Ethnography is largely indebted to Dr. Barth for linguistic and historic affiliations, and relations of Soudanic races and tribes; and especially of the widely extended tribes of the Tawareks of the Sahara.

I have, heretofore, written some ethnographic notices of the principal negro tribes of Soudan, and of the Tuarycks, Touareg or Tawareks, of the Desert. These were published during my official residence at Algiers, in the Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, and were subsequently embodied in my "Notes on Africa." It is gratifying to me to find, that my general outlines of the ethnography of these regions, are confirmed by Dr. Barth. My great divisions of the Tuaryck or Berber race, have been renewed by Dr.

Barth, or at least, the names which I was told that they bore, have been verified.

The learned traveller has omitted much information relative to the Tuarycks, which ethnography claims to know. And there are some of his remarks upon this Berber race which may be questioned. The tenth chapter of Vol. I. is devoted to this race, the "indigenous Berber population." He has, for instance, spoken much of the peculiar characters or writing of the Tuarycks, called *Tefinaghen rurret*; but he has not published that alphabet. Dr. Richardson did publish a specimen of it, which is very unsatisfactory or doubtful. It is to be hoped, that Dr. Barth may still supply this desideratum.

In this tenth chapter, the learned author makes the following remarks upon the etymology of the name Tawarek, Touareg, or Tuaryck, and he dissents from that which I proposed, in the Transactions of the Philosophical Society:

"This name (Touareg or Tawarek), which has been given to the Berber inhabitants of the Desert—Sahara—and which Hodgson erroneously supposed to mean 'Tribe,' is quite

foreign to them. The truly indigenous name by which these people call themselves, is the same by which they were known to the Greeks and Romans, and which was given to their ancestors by Ebn Khaldun, and other Arabic writers, viz., *Amazigh*, *Mazigh*, *Mazix*, &c. The general form now used in these regions is Amoshagh, in the singular; Imoshagh in the plural; and Temashight in the neutral form. This is the native name by which the so-called Tawarek designate their whole nation."

"If the reader inquire, who gave them the other name, I answer, with full confidence, the Arabs. And the reason why they called them so, was probably from their having *left*, or *abandoned*, their religion—*terku dinihum*. From evidence which I have collected elsewhere, it seems clear, that a great part of the Berbers of the Desert were once Christians. They are still called by some Arabs the Christians of the Desert. They afterwards changed their religion, and adopted Islam. Notwithstanding which, they still call God 'Mesi' (Messiah)."

The etymology of the name Tawarek, as "Tribes," having been first announced by my-

self, and subsequently adopted by eminent ethnographers of Europe, it is proper that I should examine Dr. Barth's denial, which he makes with confidence.

In the first place, the term Targhec, in the singular, Touareg or Tawarek in the plural, is not "foreign" to the *language* of these Berbers. In the vocabulary of Dr. Barth itself, this word is found twice as the term for *tribe*, race, or people. It is quite true, however, that neither the Berber tribes of the Sahara, nor those of the Atlas, commonly apply the name of Tawarek and Kabail to themselves. But most certainly, both these names are applied to these tribes by the conquering Arabs, and the inhabitants of towns. And so universally accepted is the name, that if a Berber of the Desert be asked, *Enta Targhee?* (Are you a Targhee?) he will answer, Yes! And so also will a Kabail of the Atlas. The negroes of Soudan most generally use this name, as applied to the Desert tribes. The Arabs and Berber inhabitants of Mourzook, Gadamis, and Twat, do not speak of an Amoshagh, but of a Targhee. The Moors

of Algiers do not speak of Berbers, but of Kabail.

In reference to the etymology of the word Tawarek, Dr. Barth says, that "*Tarikat*," which means "tribe," is an Arabic, and not a Berber "word." The mistake which, I think, he makes, is in supposing Targhee to come from *Tarikat*. At p. 599, Vol. V., in the Temashight vocabulary, the word for tribe is *Terert*. The proper value of the guttural R, in this word, is *gh*. So that "tribe" in Temashight is Teright, or Tarigh-t. In another part of this vocabulary, *Terert* or *Tarigh-t*, is the word for nation, race, or people. Professor Newman, with his usual acumen, in his annotations upon this Temashight vocabulary, asks with great significance, if *Terigh-t* be equal to *Tarikat*. He had doubtless remarked the criticism of Dr. Barth upon my etymology, and it appeared to him, that if the latter were Arabic for tribe, *Terigh-t* must be Berber. There are various names in Temashight for families, districts of country, and fractions of races. *Kel*, *fada*, *tausit*, and *Terigh-t* are used. Definite corresponding terms in English, it may be difficult to affix. In

Kabail, the terms *Aith* and *Arsh* may represent the affiliations of families and tribes. In Temashight, the term Terigh-t or Targhi-t, would seem to be the most generic, like the words nation or race.

The etymology of the name Targee, 'Touareg, proposed with confidence by Dr. Barth, is analogous to that which has been attributed to the name Kabyle. Fanciful etymologists have found in this latter name, the indication and tradition of the Atlas Berbers having *accepted* the new religion of Islam. The Arabic word *Kabel* means to *accept*. On the other hand, by a like fancy, the Berber Targee derives his name from a tradition, of having *left* or *abandoned* his early faith, the Christian religion. The word *Tark*, in Arabic, means to leave, or abandon. I think it would be safe to leave both these etymologies to the Moslim priests, Sheickhs, Tolba and Maalim, with whose religious zeal or exaltation, they probably both originated. There can be no doubt, however, as ecclesiastic history confirms, that in North Africa, for some centuries before the irruption of Islam, Christianity was widely preached and

diffused. It is reasonable to suppose, that the Christianity of the Tuarycks was merely nominal. The term *nasrani*, *ensara*—Christians—is sometimes applied to tribes of the Sahara, by those of Soudan ; and, e converso, the Tuarycks apply it sometimes to Pagan negroes, instead of *Kufar*—infidels. I suppose this appellation to be one of reproach, rather than an indication of religious faith.

The proof of the early Christianity of the Touareg, derived by Dr. Barth from the word *Mesi*, I think is a mere coincidence, which occurs in all languages. *Mes*, in Temashight, is the word for Master. It happens to resemble Messiah. The Arabs use the word *Rebi*—Rabbi—Master, for Lord ; and by analogy, the Touareg use *Mesi*.

The Temashight vocabulary of Dr. Barth, p. 629, gives *Tausit* as the name for tribe, and *Terert* (Teregh-t) as that for nation. At page 599, the name for tribe is *Terert* (Teregh-t). *Irzan terert nissen*, i. e., they have destroyed their tribe. It is greatly to be regretted, in the interests of philology, that Dr. Barth should have adopted the French mode

of representing the Arabic letter *Ghain*, by the roman letter *R*. The French write the Arabic word *Ghazzia* as Razia. It is quite impossible to imagine, what sound is represented by the letter *R*, unless the reader be familiar with the guttural *Ghain*. So also, the purposes of science are defeated by such incorrect notation of sounds. The word *Terert* might, with equal reason, be written *Teghert*, as *Tereght*, if the power of the second *R* were not established.

TEFINAGHEN. *Kelam-i-Tefinag*. This is the name given to their written characters, by the Tuarycks.

The opinion of Dr. Barth is, that Tefinaghen means *signs* or *tokens*. He says that the *ulemmâ* of the Tademekket and Awelimmeden Touareg, called the letters of printed books—*Tefinaghen rurret*. *Rurret*, restored to its proper spelling, would be *Ghoorret*, from *ghoor* to write. We have thus Tefinagh, writing, for Tefinaghen rurret.

It is much to be regretted, that Dr. Barth did not obtain from the learned Touareg, from whom he learned the language, what is the exact meaning of Tefinag. The meaning of this

word is thus left to conjecture. In the Tema-shight vocabulary, there occurs this phrase:—Ikfasagh el Kurán. Etafagh. I know the Kurán by heart. On this phrase, Professor Newman remarks, that “*Etafagh* means “I have caught or held fast.” “It is the Arabic *Khataf*, whether native or imported.” In this case, the Berber word would correspond with *apprehendere*—*apprendre*, to hold fast or to learn. Tefinaghen may therefore mean learning or letters. Or if the verb *Ikf*—to give—enter into the composition of this word, then Tefinaghen would be *Data*, instead of *Signa*.

Dr. Barth, unfortunately, has not devoted a chapter to these Tefinaghen, or written characters of the Touareg. I trust he will, hereafter, make this rare and important contribution to ethnology. The powers of the Tefinag alphabet do not seem to have been fully established. They certainly are far from being established by Mr. Richardson, who sent to the Foreign Office in London what he called a *fragmentary* alphabet. His own name, written by his Taleb in Tefinag, would indicate that the characters were syllabic. Dr. Barth copied seven of these

characters from the rocks at Aisala, which he reads as *Enfad Mashbel*. If this reading be correct, the two words are not Berber, I think, to judge of them by their physiognomy or aspect.

In the *Revue Archeologique* of November, 1845, Mr. De Saulcy established the value of twelve characters. The bilingual inscription of Thugga establishes the value of fifteen letters, and six remain undetermined. Mr. Richardson regretted, that he did not "push his inquiries further on the subject" of these Tefinaghen. The volumes of Dr. Barth do not much assist these inquiries. Doubtless, the subject will hereafter be fully treated by him.

These Numidian or Libyan characters, it is well known, were used in earlier times, wherever the language was spoken—from the Canary islands to the Oäses of Egypt. Bétancourt is authority, that Libyan inscriptions were found in the mummy caves of the Canaries. There are "innumerable inscriptions" with this character in Fezzan and Ghaat. The latest report of travellers on this subject, is that of Mr. James Hamilton, communicated to the Geo-

graphic Society of Paris, by the Baron Jomard, and published in their Transactions of this year.

“I remarked,” says Mr. Hamilton, “with great interest, certain marks (letters?) on the vaults of the great reservoir at Cyrene, and on the stones forming the portal of Ptolemais, made by the workmen, and which doubtless relate to the Berber language. On the route from Benghazi to Augela, at Tel-i-mout, there are many of these marks of more recent tracing. They are *signs* to indicate the passage of nomadic tribes.”

The eminent savant, the Baron Jomard, remarks, in the same communication, that the Libyan or Touareg language must have been written from time immemorial. The inscription of Thugga would prove this fact. In the Oäsis of Ghaat, there should be found books, written with these characters. The Touaregs now, as in former times, trace them upon instruments; embroider them on clothes; and cut them on rocks. They are also used as ciphers in secret correspondence. It was an Arabic letter written in this cipher, which

enabled Mr. de Saulcy to affix values to a certain number of them.

Dr. Barth has justly remarked, that the names of men and women among the Touareg are very expressive, and full of meaning. He has not furnished any names of men, and but three of women, who were the distinguished beauties of Taghajit. These three names are:

Telittefok,

Tatinata,

Temetile.

The first name means the *light of the sun*; the third is *moonlight*; and the second, I conjecture, means *large-eyed*. In the Transactions of the American Philosophic Society may be found my lists of Berber names, with their interpretations, which are eminently poetic and expressive.

I must, in conclusion, express my earnest hope, that Dr. Barth will, hereafter, publish his ethnologic notes on the Songhay, Foolah, and other powerful negro races of the Niger, and supply the deficiencies now indicated in Berber linguistics.



